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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/690,944	10/22/2003	Camillo Mele	133569-00011-2	6188

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EXAMINER

OMGBA, ESSAMA

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3726

DATE MAILED: 11/02/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

E

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/690,944	Applicant(s) MELE, CAMILLO	
	Examiner Essama Omgba	Art Unit 3726	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 August 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 26-29 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,4,6-10,13,14,16,17 and 19-25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 3,5,11,12,15 and 18 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-10, 12-14, 16, 17 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Laurensen in view of Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (AAPA).

With regards to claims 1, 14 17 and 20-22, Laurensen discloses a method of making a decorative arrangement comprising providing a thick layer of any known hardenable malleable material (page 2, line 8-10) supported on a rigid board of wood or plastic and securing a plurality of decorative elements to the material before it dries out and hardens, see abstract. Laurensen does not specifically disclose the hardenable material as being a wet foam, however wet foam materials that harden into rigid foam are old and well known in the art as attested by Applicant's Admitted Prior Art to be known as AAPA, page 1-3 and page 8, lines 4-7. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have used wet foam as the hardenable material in the method of Laurensen, in light of the teachings of AAPA, in order to achieve the benefits of using such known and readily available known wet foam. Applicant should note that rigid foams are widely used in the floral industry and that using preformed rigid foam as a support structure is an obvious matter of design choice wherein no stated problem is solved or unexpected results obtained in

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using preformed rigid foam as support structure versus any suitable support structure.

Applicant should also note that the recitation of the dried nodule being used as a decorative rigid foam is considered intended use. A recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim. In a claim drawn to a process of making, the intended use must result in a manipulative difference as compared to the prior art. See *In re Casey*, 370 F.2d 576, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) and *In re Otto*, 312 F.2d 937, 939, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963).

For claims 2, 4, 7 and 10, Applicant should note that it is within the general knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art to provide proper support for the decorative arrangement.

For claim 13, Applicant should note that sequentially applying portions of at least some of the decorative elements to the material prior to complete drying of the material is an obvious matter of design choice wherein no stated problem is solved or unexpected results obtained in sequentially applying portions of some of the decorative elements to the material versus the method taught by Laurensen.

For claim 16, Applicant should note that the hardenable material of Laurensen is secured to the support structure prior to complete drying of the material.

For claim 19, Applicant should note that Laurensen contemplates the use of such decorative elements.

For claim 23, Applicant should note that it is within the general knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art to appropriately dry wet foam.

For claim 24, Applicant should note that mere duplication of the essential method steps involves only routine skill in the art.

For claim 25, see figure 5 of Laurenson.

3. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Laurenson/AAPA as applied to claim 2 above, and further in view of Hillebrand (US Patent 4,044,502).

Laurenson/AAPA discloses a method of making a decorative arrangement as shown above except for providing water in the container and introducing portions of live plants into the water. However Hillenbrand teaches such an arrangement, see column 2, lines 33-34 and figure 3. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, to have provided water in the container and to have introduced portions of live plants in the water in the method of Laurenson/AAPA, in light of the teachings of Hillenbrand, in order to keep the live plants fresh.

4. Claims 8 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Laurenson/AAPA as applied to claim 7 above, and further in view of Harris (US patent 4,941,572).

With regards to claim 8, Laurenson/AAPA discloses a method of making a decorative arrangement as shown above except for providing the wet foam in a plurality of different colors. However it is known to provide such display foam in different colors

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to enhance the appearance thereof as attested by Harris, see column 4, lines 60-64.

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, to have provided the foam in Laurensen/AAPA in different colors, in light of the teachings of Harris, in order to enhance the appearance of the foam.

For claim 9, Applicant should note that the particular shape of the arrangement lends no patentable weight to the method being claimed.

Allowable Subject Matter

5. Claims 26-29 are allowed.

6. Claims 3, 5, 11, 12, 15 and 18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments filed August 17, 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive save for claims 3, 5, 11, 12, 15 and 18.

In response to Applicant's argument that Applicant's invention has no requirement of a plurality of nails in a number sufficient to constitute a reinforcement for the malleable material as Applicant's wet foam is partially cured to create a nodule that is self-supporting, the examiner submits that Laurensen disclosed that the malleable material can be laid on the support "armed" (use of supporting nails) or not, see page 2, paragraph 4 of the translation submitted by applicant and page 2, lines 21-24 of

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Laurenson. Furthermore it is noted that the features upon which Applicant relies (i.e., the partially cured wet foam being self-supporting) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

The basis for the rejection of claim 14 has been outlined in the rejections above. Furthermore surface mounting the flowers or having the stems of flowers penetrate the malleable material is an obvious matter of design choice and the malleable material of Laurenson can be used with either surface mounting or with the stems penetrating the material.

Regarding the arguments relating to claims 2, 4, 7, 10 and 17, Applicant should refer to the first paragraph of the examiner's response to argument above, See also figures 4 and 5 of Laurenson that depict the malleable material being supported on a structure without nails.

In response to arguments relating to claims 13 and 24, the basis for the rejections has been outlined in the rejections above and figure 5 of Laurenson clearly shows the malleable material with decorative arrangements therein not covered by plastic wrap.

In response to Applicant's argument that nothing in the prior art suggests the preferred temperature and drying time recited in claim 23, the examiner submits that it is within the general knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art to determine appropriate

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temperature and drying time for a given foam, which will depend on the application and the particular foam used.

In response to arguments relating to claim 25, the examiner would like to point out that a typographical error caused part of the rejection to read "figure 6" instead of "figure 5" which clearly shows the malleable material disposed in a readily visible position.

In view of the above remarks, the examiner submits that a prima facie case of obviousness has been established in the instant application save for claims 3, 5, 11, 12, 15, 18 and 26-29.

Conclusion

8. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Essama Omgba whose telephone number is (571) 272-4532. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9-6:30, 1st Friday off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Bryant can be reached on (571) 272-4526. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Essama Omgba
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3726

eo
October 29, 2005